

the highly lucrative shuttle routes between Washington, D.C., New York, and Boston, which are now operated by US Airways. In addition, American Airlines is willing to pay \$82 million for a 49 percent stake in DCAir, the airline created to allay antitrust concerns about the proposed United-US Airways merger. DCAir plans to take over most of US Airways' operation at Reagan Washington National Airport.

If approved, United Airlines and its arch rival, American Airlines, will control half of the U.S. air travel market. Delta Airlines, United and America's next biggest competitor, will be left behind with only 18 percent of the domestic U.S. market.

In response to this unprecedented consolidation of the airline industry, the CEO of the low-fare airline AirTran called the proposed merger one of the most brazen attempts by any two dominant businesses in any industry to simply accomplish together what they so vigorously resisted in recent years, the reregulation of the airline industry. However, instead of the Federal Government doling out routes and dividing up airport assets, it is the airlines themselves that are gobbling up their weaker rivals and carving up the Nation.

With new hubs in Charlotte, Pittsburgh and Philadelphia to complement the existing operation at Washington-Dulles, United will rule the eastern seaboard in a proposed merger era. American will dominate the Midwest with the addition of St. Louis to its hubs at Dallas-Fort Worth and Chicago O'Hare. American will also have a significant presence at Reagan Washington National and New York's Kennedy airports.

Faced with this tremendous market power possessed by a combined United-US Airways and a combined American-TWA-US Airways, the remaining network carriers, namely Delta Airlines, Northwest Airlines and Continental, will have to merge in some fashion to survive. This is the only way that they can acquire the size and scale necessary to compete in a rapidly consolidating industry. Therefore, in a postmerger era, it will not be two megacarriers dividing up half of the U.S. market, but, rather, three or four megacarriers controlling 80 percent of the U.S. market.

Low-fare carriers will have to compete vigorously for the remaining 20 percent. This is, of course, if the megacarriers allow them to survive. Even today, when competition supposedly is alive and well, major carriers use their power to frustrate new entrant carriers and drive smaller competitors out of their established hubs.

The major carriers use everything in their power, including airplane capacity, airport assets, and frequent flier programs, to squash competition from low-fare, new entrant airlines. Yet, the major carriers do not vigorously compete with one another. The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) found that major network airlines have raised fares the most in

markets where they compete only with one another. When they are forced to compete against a low-fare carrier, prices have not risen nearly as much. In fact, according to the DOT, in a market lacking a discount competitor, 24.7 million passengers per day pay on average 41 percent more than their counterparts in a hub market with a low-fare competitor.

Three mega-carriers will have mega-market power and even more tools to drive out and keep out new competition. And, if six major carriers do not compete against each other today, why would three mega-carriers compete against each other in a post-merger tomorrow? Therefore, if the U.S. airline industry is allowed to consolidate, we will be left with essentially a re-regulated airline industry where the airlines call the shots and set the fares. With so few choices, airlines would have a captive consumer. Customer service would decline—if that is even possible given the level it is at today—and fares would increase. It's a lose-lose situation for customers. In that case, the federal government will have no choice but to step in and, in the public interest, assume its role as regulator. That's right. I firmly believe that if there are only three or four mega-carriers serving the U.S. market, the federal government will once again have to regulate the airline industry—overseeing fares, routes, and access to airports—in order to ensure a healthy state of competition.

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#### REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 8, DEATH TAX ELIMINATION ACT OF 2001

Mr. REYNOLDS, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 107-39) on the resolution (H. Res. 111) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 8) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to phaseout the estate and gift taxes over a 10-year period, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

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The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TIBERI). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BILIRAKIS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extension of Remarks.)

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#### EQUAL PAY DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, just a few minutes ago I was here in jest and in honoring the Duke team. I want to speak on a very serious subject at this point in time.

It is just days after the end of Women's History Month and just weeks before millions of Americans will collectively honor their mothers on Mother's Day. Both events are borne out of the

great respect and admiration we have for the women who have so strengthened our Nation, our society, and our families. Yet even today, Mr. Speaker, we must face up to this reality: American women earned only 72 cents for every dollar that men earned in 1999 for equal and comparable work, according to the latest report from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. And that, Mr. Speaker, is a drop of 1 cent from 1998. Put another way, that 72-cent figure means that today, Tuesday, April 3, is the day on which women's wages catch up to men's wages from the previous week. It takes women 7 working days to earn what men earn in 5.

This gender wage gap exists even when men and women have the same occupation, race, and experience; are employed in the same industry, in the same region, and are working for firms of equal size. But here, Mr. Speaker, is what it means in real terms. Each week it means that women, on average, have \$28 less to spend on groceries, housing, child care, and other expenses for every \$100 of work they do. Each month it means that women, on average, work 1 week for free. And over the course of a lifetime, it means that the average 25-year-old woman will lose more than \$5 million due to the wage gap. Let me repeat that: During their working lives, women will, on average, lose \$5 million because of the unfair wage gap.

The wage gap is even larger for women of color. African American women are paid only 65 cents for every dollar earned by a man, and Hispanic women make only 52 cents for every dollar earned by a man.

Yes, our Nation has made great strides in gender equality. In 1979, for example, women earned only 63 cents for every dollar men earned. But the wage disparity that exists in our society continues, and it is simply unacceptable. It is wrong.

I speak not only as a legislator, but as the father of three daughters and the grandfather of two granddaughters. Bella Abzug, a leader in the fight for women's equality and a former Member of this House, once remarked, and I quote, "The test for whether or not you can hold a job should not be the arrangement of your chromosomes." We must apply that same test with equal vigor on the issue of fair pay. If you can do your job, there must be no question that you will receive fair pay for your labor.

This issue, after all, is not strictly a woman's issue. It is an issue that strikes at the heart of family finances and fairness. Unequal pay robs entire families of economic security. More women than ever are in the work force today, and their wages are essential in supporting their families. Sixty-four percent of working women provide half or more of their family's income, according to a 1997 study by the AFL-CIO. And the wage gap costs the average American family approximately \$4,000 each year.